

**METHODS AND APPARATUS FOR MAKING
PRECISE INCISIONS IN BODY VESSELS**

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Methods and apparatus employed in surgery involving making precise incisions through body vessel walls, particularly coronary arteries. A body vessel cutting instrument comprises an elongated instrument shaft extending between a shaft proximal end adapted to be manipulated outside the patient's body and a shaft distal end and having a shaft axis and first and second cutting blades supported at the shaft distal end. The first cutting blade extends substantially orthogonally or laterally to the shaft axis and has a first cutting edge extending along a trailing side, a cutting tip at the first cutting blade free end, and an atraumatic blunt surface along the leading side. The second cutting blade has a second cutting edge extending along a leading side, whereby the first and second cutting edges face one another and are brought together to slit a vessel wall.